DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 158 178 CG 012 746

AUTHOR Youst, David B.
TITLE Advising in Individualized Higher Education.
PUB DATE Mar 78
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (San Francisco, California, August 26-30, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *College Students; *Educational Counseling; *Faculty Advisors; *Faculty Development; Faculty Evaluation; Guides; Higher Education; *Individualized Programs; Individual Needs; Models; Nontraditional Students

ABSTRACT

Academic advising with adults in individualized college programs requires the development of new faculty skills. The paper provides a bibliography, a brief section on advising in traditional programs, a major focus on specific requirements of emerging faculty roles, and a concluding section on implications for faculty development and evaluation. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED158178

ADVISING IN INDIVIDUALIZED HIGHER EDUCATION

by

David B. Yoost

Empire State College

"...advising here involves the ability to maintain a reality orientation, ...listening for hidden agendas, and the ability to balance on the balls of the feet for at least an hour at a time." (anonymous Empire State College mentor--1977)

Revised for presentation at Annual Conference of The American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C. March, 1978

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D.B. Yoost

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CG012746

ADVISING ADULTS IN INDIVIDUALIZED HIGHER EDUCATION

David B. Youst

Empire State College
8 Prince Street
Rochester, New York 14607

New educational programs serving adults engaged in individualized college studies require faculty advising quite different from the traditional. This paper will deal briefly with the process of advising in traditional programs, examine advising in individualized programs and will conclude with some implications for faculty development and research.

Comparatively few books and articles have been focused on academic advising during the last twenty years. In fact, there is not a library "subject card" for our topic. Recently interest has increased however; the first National Conference on Academic Advising was held in Vermont during October 1977. Serious efforts to improve academic advising often have been segments of broader concerns. Some work is embedded in the fields of counseling and counseling psychology; student personnel work in higher education; vocational and educational information programs; human development; work on introducing students to general education; efforts concerned with faculty role and faculty competencies and contracts; personnel interviewing; types of programs such as community college and continuing education; and some is related to changes brought on by alternative and innovating colleges.

Advising will not be defined in a restrictive sense in this paper but it will not encompass counseling which requires professional competencies. Neither will it include the extreme of authoritarian decision-making by the advisor.

ADVISING IN TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

Some colleges have highly refined advisement programs which may provide advisement continuity for a two-year or even longer period, but this does not seem to be the norm in U.S. higher education. The general functions outlined by Shepard (1955), however, probably are pertinent to most traditional advising, "...help in the selection of educational experiences, ...assistance in coordinative aspects, and...assistance in self evaluation..."

A more recent formulation by O'Banion (1972) emphasized the sequential development of academic advisement as part of exploration of the general question, "How do I want to live my life?" O'Banion indicated that professional counseling is appropriate in the first two of the following five steps: 1) exploration of life goals, 2) exploration of vocational goals, 3) selectionof program, 4) selection of courses, 5) scheduling of courses.

These five steps were used by Dameron and Wolf (1974) to develop a career ladder which they identified as a new model for academic advisement in higher education. Whether a new model with specific functions, potentially served by student peers and paraprofessionals, has really developed is probably not important to pursue here. Both articles, however, do urge the systematic organization of services, and it is clear that both authors feel advisement coordination should be comprehensively improved.

Theory, while necessary in the development of our "broader view" of the advising process must find its applications in real settings and in "real time". For example, some authors have indicated that all faculty are not ideally suited to provide academic advising. However, the need for traditional colleges to register large numbers of students in a relatively short period of time probably makes it imperative that a large number of

staff/faculty participate in this process. This important function requires the advisor to know what the department/major/program/course/instructor is about and to help make a match between the college and the student. The usual prerequisites, possible course sequences, desired competencies, course availability, and course content, are the kinds of information advisors often are called upon to provide. Sometimes variations on a theme occur when a specific course is overregistered and alternative course sequences need to be invented.

One major characteristic of traditional academic advising is the relatively fixed nature of the academic choices. Making the best match between student and available courses, while a very important function, means the advisor is in a position not only of recommending but approving specific selections. Frequently the student perceives that the only purpose of the interview is to get the advisor's signature on class cards. This kind of situation, at its best, may provide the student with accurate and appropriate information about program options and a sense that enrollment in specific courses is a "good" idea. On some occasions goal-clarification and career exploration are facilitated, but, at less than its best, academic advisement can be restricted to a set of administrative controls.

Of course many colleges structure other required meetings of advisor and student but somewhere between authority and psychotherapy exists advocacy--student advocacy, encouragement, support, etc...

Academic advising is also often carried out less formally by some professors with students in their classes. In fact, independent study options within the course framework provide some professors the opportunity to develop new skills in working with students who want their own specific goals met. At every college a few professors are recognized as very effective student

advisors and certainly more study and understanding of why they are effective is indicated. Our concern in this paper, however, is to explore the demands on all faculty in individualized higher education to provide a wider than usual range of support services.

Individualized programs offer increased curricular openness and a fundamental integration of advising and instruction.

ADVISING IN INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMS

Increased diversity among students, more educational options, and self-development as emerging goals of education were identified by Chickering (1973) as trends which require the development of new competencies in advising. When the individual is the base for program development, traditional relationships are forced to undergo major changes. But faculty are individuals too and it is not at all clear yet which faculty competencies are basic and which can vary with faculty roles, personalities, and intentions.

Likewise, the diversity of characteristics presented by older than traditional age students has not been analyzed carefully enough for relevance to educational growth in emerging programs. A study by G.D. Williams (1973) indicated that more than 1/3 of 9,283 adult respondents enrolled in continuing education programs expressed some urgency for counseling services. Administrative advice and education and career information were the most requested services. The same study indicated significant differences among the following demographic variables: sex, age, education level, marital status, full-time or part-time worker, income, and veterans status. For instance, males under 25 who were veterans and had relatively low income and educational levels had very high perceived needs for advice.

Demographic variables, however, tell us little about the ways adult students approach initial sessions with faculty. The experience of some faculty in individualized programs suggests that major changes in life situations, reactions to authoritarian behavior, anxiety about developing specific personal goals, etc. are among the mixed-bag of perceptions which students bring with them to an initial interview. For example, encountering a "standard" may be a basic task. Many students seem to feel worthy but appear to have some doubts about meeting academic standards. Perhaps the simple fact that they did not complete college during the traditional time leads to some of this uncertainty. Another character-

istic of a significant number of adult students seems to involve ambiguity about how much time will be required daily. Time demands often are weighed against life style patterns and family responsibilities.

There are obviously a number of other characteristics associated with adult learners that are very important to the advising process. For our purposes now, however, it is sufficient to recognize that the diversity among students is extremely large, that variables differ appreciably from those important to traditional age undergraduates, and that the advising process must make use of the student's apparent needs.

To help a student get started in an individualized program, it seems that several competencies are required in addition to those desired in traditional programs. Beyond building rapport, being able to listen, helping to clarify, helping to set priorities, providing accurate and pertinent information, and so forth, it seems essential for a faculty member to maintain perspective on the changing nature of the interaction. This capacity, the ability to be a detached observer, combines elements of introspection, empathy, and accurate participant observation. The specific skills of structuring and restructuring during the course of an interview help provide clarity and reduce nonconstructive anxiety. While the student is moving toward the state of "owning" personal goals and learning program, and simultaneously engaging with a standard, the advisor needs to keep track of what is going on, and to keep the exchange on an even keel. This "balancing act" was mentioned in the opening quote.

A framework presented by Benjamin (1974) in his book, The Helping Interview,

distinguished between interviewer leads and responses, and authority leads and responses. Interviewer leads, according to Benjamin, range from encouragement, assurance--reassurance, suggestion, advice, urging, to moralizing; while authority leads and responses range from agreement--disagreement, approval--disapproval, opposition and criticism, disbelief, ridicule, contradiction, to denial/rejection. Perhaps the essential dualism implied in the Benjamin categories provides a glimpse of what in fact is being balanced. It is also significant that there are extremes in each listing. The need which many students have for information and approval when coupled with the faculty person's need to represent the institution, provide appropriate occasions for authoritative faculty behavior. Moreover, it is balancing advising roles with student and institutional needs that consumes huge amounts of faculty energy in individualized programs.

The non-authoritative side of the scale is represented by a hit phrase within Empire State College--giving permission. Undoubtedly this mentor activity is enmeshed with the other things going on during an interview, but it deserves singling out not only because a number of experienced faculty say it's important but because it deals with valuing. It is not always enough for a faculty member to feel "you're ok." Supportive statements are often similar to the following: "What you are saying is a really fine idea," "Sure, your idea can be developed into a good study," "We really value your individuality. In an age when masses routinely deal with the expected differences between institutional goals and institutional actions, the initial interviews serve as an individual--institutional testing ground with ground rules radically rewritten from the traditional.

Another characteristic of individualized programs is the potential for the "advisor" to become the major "teacher." It is this probable connection between the advising sessions and the following teaching sessions that is one of the most important variables in advising under individualized conditions. In practice, there is seldom a teaching session that clearly has no roots in advising or individualizing processes. At some colleges new faculty labels have been developed to modify traditional distinctions. Empire State College's mentor job description makes clear that the functions of advising, counseling, facilitating, tutoring, and so on, are each major job functions.

Ralph and Freedman (1973), writing about innovative programs, phrased it this way

> "...faculty members find adaptation far more challenging than they had expected. Their new role requires that they learn to serve as facilitators rather than authorities. They must help students derive their own goals rather than imposing them. Instead of prescribing certain information to be learned, they must assist students in finding out what needs to be known. By being routinely presented with issues on which they are not experts, yet which students wish to explore, faculty begin to serve as models of the learning process as they show students how they themselves research novel problems..."
>
> "...A student commented, 'This kind of educational experience, which requires that a student learn as much from what a teacher is as from what he says, is very threatening to some..."

> "...It is also a new experience for faculty to teach with developmental rather than purely academic goals in mind. In traditional settings faculty have some ideas of what academic achievement means and also how to evaluate it with grades. But how to create teaching methods that will produce character development, refinement of personal sensibilities and values, independent judgment, flexible perspectives, and the like, is a mystery to some faculty. Obviously teaching with a concern for the personal development of students entails much experimentation and inevitably some failures..." (pp. 76-77)

In those programs that emphasize the development of active life-long learners, the inquiry style of the faculty member, particularly the way she copes with unforseen circumstances, situations with a high potential for failure, and situations with a high degree of threat potential, may be even more important since the faculty member has already earned degrees . Her inquiry behavior arises from different sources and serves different needs, but the perceptions of the student may or may not emphasize the differences.

Modeling as a process is perhaps too tricky a concept to use in any specific way at this stage. It is certainly true that people respond significantly to others who present traits they clearly do not want to emulate. In other words, negative role modeling is a significant source of learning for some. Bell's (1967) work in this area also made it clear that people do not respond to whole person models but rather identify with or reject specific characteristics presented by other individuals. Admiring someone's inquiry style while turning off to his value system could be an example.

To summarize, advising in completely individualized programs seems to demand all of the skills required for effective and personalized advising in traditional programs. In addition, the advising relationship is more likely to develop into other academic interaction which also places heavy reliance on the student owning his or her own goals. Chickering's (1969) concept of development occuring through cycles of differentiation and integration may be a helpful way of describing what is taking place between student and faculty member; that is, a better framework than labeling faculty behaviors without reference to the student's activities.

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

Faculty development and continued research and evaluation hold hands in the title above because neither can make it alone. Chickering's (1973) article on advising identified internship programs as having great potential to help qualified and interested academics develop the interpersonal advising competencies required. Effective internships, to be more than on-the-job training, need intern-guiding faculty interaction geared toward the development of clearly stated and observable behaviors. Presently it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine who a "master" faculty person might be. As windows open, through devices such as video replay, reliable analyses become possible. Understanding better what is going on between the faculty advisor and specific adult learners prepares the way to trace faculty development patterns, and can provide the formative feedback which faculty need continuously.

One model of faculty development minimizes possible administrative mishandling by having faculty pairs (self-chosen) review one another's tapes periodically. When faculty become comfortable with the technology and the

necessary self exposure, it is possible to siphon off data (without names) which can provide indications of faculty development program effectiveness.

Another model could use the intensive study of an individual and would provide a system in which a faculty person can work alone. A sealed box would be used to collect three open-ended questionnaires from each participant for each session. Before beginning, the student and the faculty member would write about what they expect to happen in the coming session. Immediately after the meeting both participants react. Critical incidents and other techniques might be used. The faculty person could be asked to evaluate his specific advising "successes" and goals. The third feedback sheet would be collected one or two weeks after the meeting to provide data on longer range impact. If the session were videotaped (or only a selected 10 minute section), outside analyses could be compared with the perceptions of both participants. Presumably, the most effective faculty advisor, among her strengths, would include relatively high correspondence between what she thought was happening and what the other evidence indicated was going on. A series of only a few sessions with a few students could provide compelling feedback for faculty development.

Of course, hundreds of variations are possible. The uses of any which make the process more visable and which value learning from mistakes will improve advising in individualized higher education.

From Carl Rogers: the man and his ideas by Richard Evans, 1975.

"...In 1938, on a wire recorder, he was the first to record a therapeutic hour." "In effect he managed to demystify the practice of therapy. He showed how it really works."

"Until Rogers changed the rules of the game, psychotherapists only knew about each other's work from dramatic descriptions after the hour was over, possibly tending to present themselves as being somewhat more brilliant than they actually were. Rogers, on the other hand, is willing to document his work, not from selective recall but from verbatim transcripts of the interaction..."

"...One cannot help but respect a person who will show himself both failing and succeeding when it would be easy to play the game the way others have played it, letting us see only that which makes him look wise and competent..."

(pp. xxxi - xxxv)

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Barbier, M.N. "Counseling the mature woman" Adult Leadership 1971, (20) 187-189.

Bell, A.P. Role Models: their relationship to educational and occupational behaviors unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1967

Benjamin, A. The helping interview, 2nd Ed. 1974

Bonar, J.R. and Mahler, L.R. "Center for undecided college students" Personnel and Guidance Journal 54: 481-4, May 1976

Borgard, J.H. et al "Faculty perception of academic advising" bibl. NASPA Journal 14: 4-10, Winter 1977

Brigham Young University "Computer Assisted Advisement at BYU" College and University 51: 622-4, Summer 1976

Breen, G.J. "Active-directive counseling in an adult education setting" Journal of College Student Personnel 1970 (11) 279-283

Chickering, A.W. Education and identity, 1969

Chickering, A.W. "College advising for the 1970's" in J. Katz (ed.) Services for students, Jossey-Bass, 1973

Dameron, J.D. and Wolf, J.C. "Academic advisement in higher education: a new model" Journal of College Student Personnel (15) 470-473 (Nov. 1974)

Farmer, M.L. (ed) Counseling services for adults in higher education Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecros Press, 1971

Fisher, J.A. "Educational counseling for adults" in C.H. Thompson, (ed) Counseling adults: contemporary dimensions, 1969

Glennen, R.E. "Intensive college counseling; academic advisors," School Counselor 24: 48-5, S. 1976

Grites, T.J. "Student Development through academic advising: a 4 x 4 model" bibl. NASPA Journal, 14: 33-7, Winter 1977

Hardee, M.D. Faculty advising in colleges and universities Student personnel series, No. 9 American Personnel and Guidance Association, 1970

Hardee, M.D. The faculty in college counseling McGraw Hill, 1959

Hardee, M.D. Counseling and guidance in general education Association of Higher Education, World Book Co., 1955

Johnson, J.N. and Peterson, H.L. "University of Minnesota faculty views on individualized education: how the three campuses compare" mimeo, University Without Walls, January 1977

Johnstone, J.W.C. and Rivera, R.J. Volunteers for learning, Chicago: Aldine, 1965

Kirk, H.P. "Bringing counseling and placement together" Journal of College Placement, 1971 31 (4) 44-48

O'Banion, T. "An academic advising model" Junior College Journal, 1972 42 (6), 62-69.

O'Mahoney, T.J. Self development processes: a model and an heuristic procedure for investigating aspects of these processes (2 vols.) unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Leeds, England 1968

Porter, L. "Adults have special counseling needs" Adult Leadership 1970 (18) 275-276

Ralph, N. and Freedman, M. "Innovative colleges: challenge to faculty development" in M. Freedman (ed.) Facilitating faculty development, Jossey-Bass, 1973

Shepard, E.L. "The role of the faculty counselor in general education" in M. Hardee (ed.) Counseling and guidance in general education, World Book Co., 1955

Thompson, C.H. (ed.) Counseling the adult student, 1967; College personnel services for the adult, 1968; Counseling adults: contemporary dimensions, 1969 All reports of Commission XIII - Student personnel work for adults in higher education, American College Personnel Association

Vontress, C.E. and Thomas, H.A. "Counseling adults" Adult Leadership 1968, (17) 279-280

Williams, G.D. "Urgency and types of adult counseling needs among continuing education students." Journal of College Student Personnel (14) 501-506 Nov. 1973

Williams, V. "Management System for a faculty advising project" NASPA Journal 14: 44-7, Winter 1977

ERIC References

ERIC Ed 119 603 "Advising-Attrition Effects - A 12-Month Analysis"

ERIC Ed 133 631 "Academic Advisement: Personnel and Preparation"

ERIC Ed 130 675 "Counseling and Information Services for Adult Learners in North America - Educational Documentation and Information"

ERIC Ed 110 842 "Effectiveness of an Orientation and Counseling Program for Adult Evening Students at Drake University"

ERIC Ed 133 630 "Academic Advising in Action - A Specific Program"

ERIC Ed 133 670 "Academic Advising at the University of Maryland: Introduction"

ERIC Ed 133 632 "Analysis of the Academic Advising Process" Jan. June 1977

ERIC 114 583 "Educational Counseling of Adults: Where Its At"

ERIC Ed 117 636 "Applications of Video in Counseling and Counselor Training: An Annotated Reference Source"

ERIC Ed 131 374 "Video in Psychotherapy and Therapist Training: An Introduction and Bibliography"